



Schalke stadium to turn into Big Air Paradise

The renowned German Gelsenkirchen stadium "Arena auf Schalke" - predominantly famous as home of Bundesliga football club, FC Schalke 04, will turn into a virtual winter sports paradise for one day when the FIS Snowboard World Cup Tour visits the German Ruhr area on Saturday 12 November to stage what will be the second Big Air competition of the 2005/2006 season.

A number of television stations have already expressed their interest in broadcasting the competition which will feature as the absolute highlight during an extensive number of day events in the arena. No less than 35'000 people are expected to pass through the gates for the competition which is designed to create new exposure around the sport.

Built at a cost of €192 million, the Arena was inaugurated in August 2001 and has a capacity of 60,000, including 16,000 standing places to maintain the legendary atmosphere, becoming a 52,000-seater for international events. Its main features include a four-screen video cube, a removable pitch (which will be rolled out of the stadium for the snowboard event), a retractable roof, and a chip-card method of payment within the arena. Access to the stadium by car is easy, along the A2 or A42 motorways, with parking spaces for 14,000 vehicles.

Preparations progressing for 2009 FIS Nordic World Championships

While the 2009 FIS Nordic World Championships in Liberec (CZE) might seem far into the future, preparations for the prestigious event are already well under

way. For this reason FIS Race Directors for Cross Country and Nordic Combined, Jürg Capol and Uli Wehling and the Chairman for the FIS Sub-committee for Rules and Control and FIS homologation inspector, Karl-Heinz Lickert travelled to the Czech ski resort from 24th-26th May for a thorough inspection of the courses which will be used during the championships.

The work was primarily based around an inspection of the profile and layout of the tracks – a theme which will be further discussed in connection with a homologation seminar in the end of August with the participation of FIS Cross Country technical delegates and homologation inspectors.

Liberec, who was awarded the championships at the 2004 FIS Congress in Miami (USA), has previously hosted a number of FIS Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined World Cup events although the city is still looking forward to hosting a FIS Cross Country World Cup competition. In total Liberec has played host to no less than 40 FIS Cross Country, Nordic Combined and Ski Jumping competitions over the years.

Number of registered athletes for FIS points on the rise

To demonstrate the popularity of the FIS disciplines, it is certainly interesting to dive into the statistics to see the number of athletes registered to compete in FIS races by their National Ski Associations.

In 2005 the total number of athletes registered for FIS points was 26'712, a modest increase in comparison with 2004 when the total number was 25'858.

Not surprisingly Alpine Skiing has the largest number with 13'919 while Cross Country skiing, Snowboard and Masters Racing have

similar numbers with 3'674, 3'571 and 3'530 respectively. Indeed the number of within alpine skiing has been on a steady rise since 1963 when 200 Ladies and 450 were registered by their National Ski Associations with FIS. Today 5'049 Ladies and 8'870 Men are registered to compete in FIS alpine competitions and be classified on the FIS Points List.

There are athletes registered for Ski Jumping and, Nordic Combined too, however, there are just no FIS points in these disciplines. Together the number of registered athletes in these disciplines makes up 1'091.

Dear Friends of FIS,

Should you have any feedback, comments, you are most welcome to send them to me at: frandsen@fis.ch. "FIS Newsflash" will not only be distributed via e-mail but also be published in the News section of the FIS Website.

Best regards

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